Development Control – Delegated Officer Report

Application Number: AWDM/1522/24 Recommendation: Approve

Site: **19 Farncombe Road, Worthing**

Proposal: **Two-storey rear extension with first floor terrace to existing office (Use Class E); basement extension with front and rear lightwells; alterations to front boundary treatment and new rooflight to office building**

Date of site visit: 21.01.2025

Neighbours checked: Y

Additional neighbour notifications: N Site notice posted 21.01.2025

Site, Surroundings and Proposal

The site relates to a detached two storey Victorian villa located on the west side of Farncombe Road, north of its junction with Church Walk which is on the opposite side of the street. The building is currently vacant but was previously used as offices. The site is within a Protected Key Employment area as a protected office location. The site has an in and out driveway which can accommodate 4 cars off street. The site is within a controlled parking zone which restricts parking between 10-11am and 2-3pm to residents only.

There is a protected tree at the frontage, in the south east corner of the site, where TPO No.5 of 2006 applies. The site is within the Farncombe Road Conservation Area and is a local interest building.

To the north of the site is the five storey mansard roofed 1960's office building. To the south is a semi-detached villa, extended into the roof and converted into 3 flats.

Permission was granted in June 2024 for an extension to the rear of the building as extended office accommodation and included alterations to the front boundary treatment including new railings (AWDM/0296/24 refers). The current application also proposes a rear extension which, as before would be part two storey/part single storey and would measure 8 metres in depth at ground floor level and 5 metres deep at first floor with a roof terrace on the flat roof of the single storey element. Also as before there would be alterations to the front boundary treatment to include railings. However the current application also proposes a basement level in the extension with lightwells and making use of the basement area of the existing building for additional office accommodation.

Relevant Planning History:

AWDM/1567/24 - Proposed single storey annexe to the rear of the garden
STATUS: Pending Decision

AWDM/0296/24 - A two storey rear extension with first floor terrace to existing Office (Use Class E) and provision of front boundary treatment
STATUS: APP 4th June 2024.

AWDM/1295/19 - Approval of Details Reserved by Conditions: 4 - Details of doors and windows; 7 - Details of secure cycle facilities; 8 - Details of surface water drainage, of Application no. AWDM/0365/17.
STATUS: APP 22nd October 2019.

AWDM/0005/18 - Application for a non-material amendment to previously approved AWDM/0365/17. Amendments: Removal of first floor window on north elevation, new window at first floor level on west elevation and alteration of ground floor west elevation window and new conservation rooflight to rear elevation.
STATUS: APP 25th January 2018.

AWDM/0365/17 - Part two storey part single storey rear extension and conversion of office building to form 4 no. two bedroom flats with rear first floor balcony
STATUS: APP 16th June 2017.

AWDM/0209/13 - Re-surfacing and re-modelling layout of existing forecourt car parking area, including the formation of a second vehicular access and crossover onto Farncombe Road (to allow ingress and egress by vehicles) and ancillary works; and installation of replacement painted timber front door and re-modelling of front entrance steps
STATUS: APP 30th April 2013.

90/0826 – Application for Conservation Area Consent for the demolition of existing north (side) and west (rear) extension. Approved 6.11.90

90/0820 – Alterations and extension to existing building. Granted 6.11.90

86/0809 – Formation of additional vehicular access onto a classified road and erection of new gate pier. Granted 4.11.86

85/1166 – Change of use from house to offices. Granted 4.2.86

Consultations:

The Council's **Drainage Consultant** has commented on the original submission as follows:

Following a review of the submitted information, we have noted that insufficient information has been provided to demonstrate the application is in accordance with the NPPF and the PPG. The provided infiltration testing demonstrates that infiltration is not a viable option. Therefore, the applicant should provide updated drainage information that does not include infiltration.

We would recommend the application is not approved until updated information is received that addresses the above points.

Reason
To prevent flooding in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 165-175 by ensuring the satisfactory management of local flood risk, surface water flow paths, storage, and disposal of surface water from the site in a range of rainfall events and ensuring the SuDS proposed operates as designed for the lifetime of the development.

The Council's **Drainage Consultant** has provided further clarification:

The provided infiltration testing in Appendix F of document 1ecfar/2409049 dated 17/12/2024, demonstrates that infiltration is not a viable option. The first test failed to drain and therefore three tests, as required in the BRE 365 guidance, could not be completed. Therefore, the applicant should provide updated drainage information that does not include infiltration. By following the hierarchy of preference, attenuation with a controlled discharge rate to the surface water sewer as identified to the north of the site should be considered. The discharge rate from the site should be no more than identified greenfield runoff rates to demonstrate flood risk is not increased elsewhere. We would recommend the application is not approved until updated information is received that addresses the above points.

The applicant agent has subsequently provided a technical note and rebuttal in response to the objection which is summarised as follows:

3.1 This technical note has shown that the infiltration rate taken from the on-site soakage testing is indeed viable for infiltration. Trial pits that take longer than 7.5 hours to empty still return useable infiltration rates and do not constitute a 'failed' test. The time constraints at 19 Farncombe Road at the time of the site investigation have been highlighted and present why three full tests were not recorded and why it was not possible to be present at the conclusion of the first test. On this point, and as explained in this technical note, experience has placed designers in an uncertain position where there is no correct answer to this situation and the only alternative, which is to maintain a 24-hour watch over a trial pit, is not reasonable or practical.

3.2 It is also proposed that the infiltration rate encountered, when combined with the attenuation on offer that stores all surface water runoff from the 100-years plus 45% storm, is commensurate with the scale and risk of the development, and a more pragmatic and proportionate response to the issue of infiltration rates would be better applied in this case.

3.3 However, if the LPA do not agree with this, we request that a planning condition be placed on the consent that requires a full BRE365 soakage test to be provided prior to commencement.

3.4 Finally, a surface water sewer is not available to the development, as suggested by WSP, as there is only foul sewer in Farncombe Road.

The Council's **Drainage Consultant** has commented as follows:

Following a review of the submitted information, we note our previous comments, dated 21st January 2025, are still relevant. Infiltration testing must be carried out in accordance with BRE 365 to demonstrate infiltration is a viable option for surface water drainage. As the trial pit did not drain (as stated in Appendix F – Infiltration Testing Report of the Surface Water Drainage Strategy) an infiltration rate can not be based on the testing. Instead, an estimated infiltration rate has been provided. However, as this cannot be evidenced it is not clear that the soakaway will function as required and will not increase flood risk to the site and others. Therefore, the application is not in accordance with the NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

We would recommend the application is not approved until updated information is received that addresses the above points.

Further infiltration tests have been carried out and an infiltration testing report was submitted for consideration. The Council's Drainage Consultant has commented as follows:

Following a review of the submitted information, we have noted the updated infiltration testing demonstrates infiltration is a viable option for surface water drainage. Therefore, under the following conditions the applicant should update their drainage strategy to include calculations using the worst infiltration rate from testing. Groundwater monitoring should also be provided to demonstrate a 1m clearance between the highest recorded groundwater levels and the base of the proposed soakaway.

We would recommend the application is approved with the following conditions attached:

Condition 1: Construction shall not begin until a detailed surface water drainage scheme for the site has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The surface water drainage scheme must prioritise the use of source control Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in consideration of the Non-Statutory Technical Standards for SuDS and demonstrate no increase in flood risk as a result of the Proposed Development with sufficient supporting evidence provided to support its viability including supporting calculations for the 100% AEP (1 in 1 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year), 3.33% AEP (1 in 30 year) plus climate change, the 1% AEP (1 in 100 year) and the 1% AEP (1 in 100) plus climate change critical storms. The design should follow the hierarchy of preference for different types of surface water drainage disposal systems as set out in Approved Document H of the Building Regulations, and the recommendations of the SuDS Manual produced by CIRIA. Winter groundwater monitoring will be required to support the already provided infiltration testing and the design of any infiltration drainage. The scheme shall subsequently be implemented in accordance with the approved details before the development is completed.
Reason: To ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Adur & Worthing Council.

Condition 2: The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until details of the maintenance and management of the sustainable drainage scheme have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The drainage

scheme shall be implemented prior to the first occupation of the development hereby approved and thereafter managed and maintained in accordance with the approved details in perpetuity. The Local Planning Authority shall be granted access to inspect the sustainable drainage scheme for the lifetime of the development. The details of the scheme to be submitted for approval shall include:

I a timetable for its implementation.

II details of SuDS feature and connecting drainage structures and maintenance requirement for each aspect including a drawing showing where they are located.

III a management and maintenance plan for the lifetime of the development which shall include details of design life and the arrangements for adoption by any public body or statutory undertaker, or any other arrangements to secure the operation of the sustainable drainage scheme throughout its lifetime. This will include the name and contact details of any appointed management company.

Reason: To ensure that the development achieves a high standard of sustainability and ensure the flood risk is adequately addressed for each new dwelling and not increased in accordance with NPPF and Policies of Adur and Worthing Council.

Worthing Society – no comments received

The **Highway Authority** raises no objection and has made the following comments:

Summary and History

This application seeks the erection of a two-storey rear extension with first floor terrace; basement extension with front and rear lightwells; alterations to front boundary treatment and new rooflight to office building. The site is located on Farncombe Road, a C-classified road subject to a speed restriction of 30 mph.

WSCC in its role as Local Highway Authority (LHA) previously provided consultation advice for this site under application AWDM/0296/24 for a similar application. This previous application did not include the basement extension; however, the ground and first floor extensions have already received approval from the LPA under this proposal.

Comments

No alterations are proposed to the existing vehicular access arrangement, the original application stated that there would be 4 spaces retained however the most recent application outlines there are 0 parking spaces. The proposed development would not be anticipated to give rise to a significant material intensification of use of the existing points of access.

Under WSCC Parking Standards, the LHA would expect parking for 16 cars to be provided for an office development of this size. As such, overspill parking may have to be accommodated on-street or within nearby paid-for provision.

There are parking restrictions in place on the nearby roads that prohibit parking in places that would be detrimental to highway safety. The LHA would not anticipate that the shortfall in parking would lead to a highway safety concern or parking capacity issue in this location, although the LPA may wish to consider the potential amenity impact on on-street parking.

The LHA appreciates that the site is situated in a sustainable, well-connected location within walking/cycle distance of public transport connections. There are two car parks within a 10minute walk of the development site, Lyndhurst Road Car Park to the North and Beach House West Car Park to the south. Further west of the site lies Worthing multistorey car park. These are pay and display facilities. Regular bus services operate on Lyndhurst Road to the North and the A259 to the south, these operate services to Lancing, West Durrington, Brighton and Littlehampton amongst others.

The proposals do include new cycle parking spaces. The inclusion of a secure cycle parking provision will help promote the use of sustainable transport methods and is advised to be secured via planning condition.

Conclusion
The LHA does not consider that this proposal would have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or result in 'severe' cumulative impacts on the operation of the highway network, therefore is not contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 116), and that there are no transport grounds to resist the proposal.

If the LPA are minded to approve the application, the following condition should be applied:

Cycle parking
No part of the development shall be first occupied until covered and secure cycle parking spaces have been provided in accordance with plans and details to be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.
Reason: To provide alternative travel options to the use of the car in accordance with current sustainable transport policies.

Representations:

One representation has been received from the occupier of No.46 Madeira Avenue objecting the application on the following grounds as summarised:

- Design – not in keeping with other properties in conservation area
- Overdevelopment – too large and inappropriate for the area
- Privacy light and noise – 2 storey development would overlook garden, bedrooms and dining room. Proximity to boundaries. Would cause loss of light
- Trees and landscaping –loss of green space/habitats/trees/garden area/ecosystems

Relevant Planning Policies

Worthing Local Plan 2020-2036 (WBC 2023): Policies:
SP1 (Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development)
SS1 (Spatial Strategy)
DM5 (Quality of the Built Environment)
DM11 (Protecting and Enhancing Employment Sites)
DM15 (Sustainable Transport and Active Travel)
DM16 (Sustainable Design)
DM20 (Flood Risk and Sustainable Drainage)

DM22 (Pollution)
DM24 (The Historic Environment)

National Planning Policy Framework (MHCLG 2024)
National Planning Practice Guidance

Planning Assessment

Principle of Development

Paragraph 11 identifies at the heart of the NPPF a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision making this means approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay or where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the NPPF taken as a whole.

The NPPF states that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking account both local business needs and the wider opportunities for development.

Although surrounding uses in the vicinity of the site are predominantly residential, the site is located within a key office location where employment uses are protected against loss of other uses. Having a range of sites and premises across the borough to suit different needs of businesses for space, location and accessibility is vital to improving the competitiveness of Worthing and the wider sub regional economy. Worthing Local Plan Policy DM11 states that these key employment areas are essential in maintaining a strong and diverse supply of employment sites and premises to meet the needs of the local economy and, given the significant land constraints, the Council are seeking to protect them for employment uses appropriate to their location. Only in exceptional circumstances, where there is clear and robust evidence that the introduction of alternative uses is required to retain a diverse and resilient local economy, will such a change be considered.

The application follows a previous approval under application AWDM/0296/24 and, as before, the proposals involve a reconfiguration and extension to the existing vacant office accommodation including a new reception area, staff room facilities and additional office space, with the current application including further additional floorspace at basement level. The proposals would support the continued use as an office within this protected employment area and enhance the provision through additional employment floorspace in this sustainable location within walking and cycling distance of public transport connections and the town centre and this would be consistent with Local Plan Policy DM11.

The determining issues therefore relate to the impact of the development proposal on visual amenity and the character and appearance of the conservation area, the effects on the amenities of neighbouring occupiers, highway and parking considerations and sustainability. This has been considered below in the context of the previous approval

AWDM/0296/24 which allowed a two storey extension, roof terrace and alterations to the front boundary treatment.

Visual Amenity and impact on the Conservation Area

The site is within the Farncombe Road Conservation Area. The Conservation Area Appraisal notes the essential architectural character of the area is defined by its large villas. The prevalent features of these include:-

- Two, occasionally three storeys
- Proportions: mostly double-fronted (3 bays), with overall height, length and width being roughly equal
- Shallow-pitched, hipped roofs in natural slate
- White stucco or yellow brick elevations
- Canted bays
- Timber sashes with horns – single or double paned
- String course dividing ground and first floors
- Decorative eaves cornice
- Quoining – vermiculated (eg No.6 Farncombe Road and No's 101-103 Brighton Road) or plain (eg No.9 Farncombe Road)
- Classically inspired doorways, ith columns, pilasters, consoles etc
- Four or six panelled wooden doors
- Slender, rendered chimney stacks, many have been removed, but the chimney breasts are still evident in the external walls, distinguishing original villas from the pastiche villas of Horton Court

It also notes the gable end of a flint building has survived as part of the southern boundary wall of Griffin House which may be remnants of pre-Victorian development.

An enhancement opportunity is identified for No.19 in the replacement of the front boundary wall.

The current application follows three previous decisions which have approved a part two storey/part single storey extension of the same size and overall form as the current scheme.

As was the case with the previous application AWDM/0296/24, the proposed extension in the current scheme would be set in from each side wall and would step down in scale from the main building, with a shallow pitched roof and similar eaves overhang, where it would not have a dominant appearance or be readily visible within the conservation area. Fenestration would be in timber as before, and detailing such as window surrounds, cornice bands, and decorative quoining to match the existing building have also been included. The overall scale and design of the extension and roof terrace would be as per the previous application.

The current application also includes a new basement level with lightwells added including railings that was not part of the previous approval. Lightwells would be formed below the main front windows and to each elevation of the extension including and access stair to the north side. To the front elevation a simple vertical railing has

been included and this is indicated to match the front boundary railings that have been previously approved and were subject to precise details being agreed by condition. The Council's Design and Conservation Architect considers that the lightwells would have a limited impact and has not raised any concerns concerning the addition of a basement and lightwells to the current application and it is noted that only those at the frontage would be readily visible. It is considered that the proposals would not dominate or have any harmful impact on the character of the building or to the significance of the conservation area. Precise railing details can be agreed by condition. As before, matching materials and detailing including windows can also be secured by conditions.

Identical to the approved scheme would be vertical railings to the front boundary wall and with the inclusion of a new central pier to match the other piers as well as inward opening metal gates to each entrance as before. No changes are proposed under the current application, with the exception of additional soft landscaping, and the boundary alterations were previously considered acceptable subject to precise details of the railings and gates being agreed by condition in the interests of visual amenity.

The proposed extension and railings would not directly impact upon the protected tree but a condition is recommended for tree protection measures during the course of the proposed works.

Residential Amenity

There are high boundary walls to each side of the site forming the boundary with the neighbouring properties to the north and south.

The size and form of the extension would be as previously approved except for the addition of a basement and lightwells. The extent of the proposed rear extension would roughly align with the existing rear projection of No.17 to the south and would be approximately 4.35- 6.2 metres from the boundary on this side where the angle of the boundary widens this distance towards the rear. No. 17 has its main flank wall 6.5 metres to the south of this where there are windows and door in its side wall which are partly enclosed by an external staircase which gives access to the first floor flat and means of escape to the second floor flat. The first floor flat has its front door in the side wall together with a bathroom window and secondary bedroom window. At second floor level, above the extension, there is a door and kitchen window in the side wall. This relationship does not appear to have altered since the previous applications were considered and given the relationship on this side and separation distances, it is considered that the proposals would not give rise to any significant loss of light or outlook.

On the north side, No.21 comprises of a 5 storey office building separated from the application by a side vehicular access and high boundary wall. The relationship on this side has not altered from the previously approved scheme and as before there would be no significant impact to the amenities of the neighbouring occupiers.

As previously approved, no first floor side windows are proposed in the extension and the first floor balcony would include 1.8 metre high privacy screens at each side. The extension angles away from the boundary with No. 17 so views into the rear garden

of No. 17 would not be direct. As previously approved, a side rooflight is proposed to the existing lean-to roof on the north side and would be at a high level where it would not pose any significant threat to amenity.

In terms of the impact arising from the use of the extension and basement area and level of activity associated with the increase in office floorspace, in the context of the existing office building and limitations of the site it is considered that the proposals would not give rise to any significant loss of amenity. In relation to the roof terrace area, this was previously considered acceptable given the relationship with neighbouring properties and with the proposed use being generally more concentrated to working hours and with screening provided to each side, as before, to protect privacy.

Highways and Access

The application proposes no alterations to the existing car parking arrangements, indicating that 4 car parking spaces would be retained at the frontage. Cycle storage is indicated at the rear of the building. The Highway Authority considers that the proposed development would not be anticipated to give rise to a significant material intensification of use of the existing vehicular access and whilst the proposal would represent a shortfall in parking against the WSCC parking standards, any overspill can be accommodation on street or within nearby paid for provision. Furthermore the site is considered to be a sustainable location, well connected to the town centre and public transport connections and with the provision of cycle storage to encourage alternative modes of transport, users need not be reliant on the use of the private car. A condition is recommended to secure the provision of cycle storage to encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.

Sustainable Development

The applicant has outlined the following measures for sustainable design:

The proposal has been designed to meet or exceed the Building Regulations in terms of insulation, energy efficiency and water usage. This will be demonstrated by means of as-designed and as-built heat-loss calculations and EPC.

The site is located within a conservation area, and the conservation officer has encouraged a design for the extensions that references and compliments the existing building architecture. As such, no brises soleil or shutters are proposed. The proposed extension has deep eaves (to match existing), which provide some solar shading on the West elevation, which has the most glazing. The South elevation does not have a large amount of glazing. Cross ventilation is possible throughout the building. At Building Regulations stage overheating calculations will be carried out and, if necessary, solar reflective glazing can be installed on the West-facing elevation. The use of an existing property reduces construction waste and all waste materials taken out of the property will be sorted and suitably recycled. Any construction products that can be re-used on site will be.

The requirement for B rating Energy Performance Certificate would go be beyond the scope of this application for an extension to the existing building.

In terms of flooding and drainage, the SFRA identifies that parts of the site are susceptible to surface water flooding. Further infiltration testing has been carried out at the request of the Council's Drainage consultant and this has demonstrated that infiltration is a viable option for surface water drainage. The Drainage Consultant is now satisfied with the latest information and has recommended conditions to require a detailed surface water drainage scheme to be agreed and for details of maintenance and management of such scheme to ensure that flood risk is adequately addressed and not increased.

BNG

As set out in the Environment Act 2021, all relevant planning applications to which BNG applies will automatically be subject to a deemed pre-commencement condition (the biodiversity gain condition) which ensures that development may not begin unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been agreed.

Policy DM18 requires all new development to provide a minimum 10% net gain for biodiversity – where possible on site. A minimum 10% BNG is mandatory for small sites since April 2024.

The applicant has provided a BNG Statement with the application which explains that a baseline habitat assessment has been undertaken and no habitat degradation had taken place prior to survey. It states that there is no irreplaceable habitat within or immediately adjacent to the site.

The Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment concludes that the existing baseline biodiversity value of the site was **0.15** Habitat Units, consisting of:

• 0.006ha of modified grassland in poor condition providing 0.01 habitat units
• 0.004ha of introduced shrub (condition assessment N/A) providing 0.01 habitat units
• 0.0163ha of urban trees in moderate condition providing 0.13 habitat units

The existing urban tree is to be retained in its current condition, meaning the retention of 0.13 Habitat Units.

No linear habitats or watercourse units are present on site.

Proposals in the creation of new habitat have been indicated to comprise of:

• 0.01 of developed land, sealed surface which includes the proposed extension and patio
• 0.005ha of introduced shrub
• 0.0244ha comprised of 6no. proposed small trees

The proposed new habitat creation is indicated to deliver 0.08 habitat units. The proposals would represent an onsite net change of 38.56%.

0.009km of non-native and ornamental hedgerow is also proposed to the east of the site which is indicated to provide 0.01 Hedgerow Units.

The metric calculations and BNG Statement have identified that an on-site approach would result in over 10% Biodiversity Net Gain which if implemented would comply with BNG regulations and local plan policy DM18. This can be secured by condition and the application would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition which would require a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be formally submitted for approval at pre-commencement stage and a landscape and ecological management plan to ensure that the proposed habitats are delivered, and target conditions are achieved and maintained for at least 30 years. The applicant has agreed to this approach to securing on site BNG.

Recommendation

APPROVE subject to Conditions:-

1. Drawing Numbers
2. Standard time limit
3. Hours of construction
4. Construction Management Plan to be agreed
5. Biodiversity Gain Plan to be prepared in accordance with BNG metric and BNG Statement unless otherwise agreed
6. Landscape and Ecological Management Plan to be agreed to include management and monitoring to maintain habitat in accordance with the BGP for a minimum of period of 30 years from the completion of the development
7. Surface Water Drainage scheme to be agreed
8. Maintenance and Management of sustainable drainage scheme to be agreed
9. Tree protection barriers during works
10. Precise details of windows and doors to be agreed
11. Precise details of railings, gates and posts to be agreed including lightwell railings
12. Cycle parking to be agreed
13. Matching materials and detailing
14. Screening to roof terrace to be installed
15. Roof terrace hours of use

Informative

- The Local Planning Authority has acted positively and proactively in determining this application by assessing the proposal against all material considerations, including planning policies and any representations that may have been received and subsequently determining to grant planning permission in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as set out within the National Planning Policy Framework.
- BNG condition applies

Is recommendation contrary to letter(s) of representation? Y

Case Officer: Rebekah Hincke Date: 13.05.2025

Authorised by: Louise Prew Date 15/05/2025